

**International Development  
Research Centre**

During the past 15 years, the world's non-Communist countries alone have spent over \$130 billion in programs of international development assistance.

The people involved in these programs constitute today a community of experience and expertise unique in human history.

In the developing world, the economic growth of many countries has proceeded at rates faster than the industrialized countries ever knew at a similar stage in their own histories.

By anyone's standards, these are encouraging facts.

But in international development, the problem is not to maintain an established flow of development assistance, it is to accelerate it and improve the use of all resources to stimulate developing economies in meeting their problems.

It was in June, 1967, that the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, then Prime Minister of Canada, said:

"If free civilization is to survive and grow, we must very soon find vastly improved methods for extending the benefits of modern existence to the whole world community of man."

To discover those improved methods he suggested in the same speech the establishment of a centre for international development.

The precise nature of the centre and its purposes were still vague and undefined. It took over two years of careful investigation and planning by the Canadian International Development Agency with the active assistance and participation of a number of

government departments and experts outside of government, both in Canada and abroad, to bring the concept to the point where Governor General Roland Michener could say in his Speech from the Throne October 23, 1969:

"At this session you will be asked to consider a bill to create a Canadian international development research centre which will bring together Canadian and foreign experts on the problems of developing economies."

In his reply to the Throne Speech, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau elaborated further on the nature of the centre announcing the government's intention:

"to create, after extensive planning and consultation with other countries, an international development research centre which will be charged with the responsibility of improving the qualitative effect of Canadian and other aid projects ... a recognition that accelerated economic growth is a complex task, and is deeply interrelated with problems of social development."

On the 29th of October legislation to establish the International Development Research Centre of Canada was introduced in the House of Commons.

The second reading of Bill C-12 took place on January 12, 1970. In a speech outlining the purposes and aims of the Centre the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, said:

"The government intends to give priority to this aspect of our international

development programme and I foresee the allocation of as much as 5% of our total development aid funds to the Centre. The government is prepared to allocate a minimum of \$30 million to the administration and programmes of the Centre over the first five years."

By creating the Centre and pledging financial support for a period of 5 years, the Canadian Government has recognized the urgency and the necessity for research into the problems of development.

By the turn of the century, when the Centre will be a young 30-year-old, the heavy, awkward footprints of astronauts will have marked other planets, and the shape and pace of our life on earth will have changed beyond belief. But by that time also, about 5½ billion people will live in what we now call the world's "developing" countries. Through a higher standard of living and economic integration with the "developed" world, they may then have the freedom to enrich all of the earth's peoples by the quality of their lives and cultures. The International Development Research Centre will be committed to this goal.

The Centre will be an institution designed to apply, in a creative way, Canadian and international resources to the solution of problems in the world's developing nations. The Centre will not become a top heavy, centralized bureaucracy and its organization will be structured to provide the best possible environment for creativity and problem-solving.

The objectives of the Centre, as specified in the Act, are:

"to initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the economically underdeveloped regions of the world ..."

and particularly into the ways in which science and technology can be used in solving these problems. Also:

"to enlist the talents of natural and social scientists and technologists of Canada and other countries"

to help developing regions build up their own problem-solving capabilities; and:

"to foster cooperation in research on development problems between the developed and the underdeveloped regions for their mutual benefit."

A combination of characteristics will make the Centre unlike any other national development agency: it will be a research centre -- "problem-oriented", multi-disciplinary and international.

While Canada has a great deal of the expertise required to deal with many problems of development, most of it exists in specialized institutions and there is no existing organization capable of bringing together the various special skills required to deal with specific problems. The simplest development problems invariably become highly complex when viewed in their cultural settings. This is why the Centre's approach must also be multi-disciplinary. Despite the difficulties this creates, experience has shown clearly that there are no acceptable alternatives.

The Centre will be basically a Canadian institution with a distinctive international dimension. Its Chairman, Vice-Chairman,

and at least nine of the other 19 members of its Board of Governors must be Canadian. There will be a seven-member Executive Committee, the majority of whom must be Canadian citizens, elected annually by the Board of Governors. Beyond that, it will have an international staff and research will be conducted in Canada and elsewhere.

For example, a program to develop improved methods of preserving food and new techniques for reducing food losses might be carried out by a Canadian university recognized in this field, in collaboration with other organizations familiar with the environmental and cultural conditions of the target area.

Although the Centre's interest priorities will be decided by its Board of Governors, research areas suggested to date by the Canadian International Development Agency and the United Nations Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development include: the development of new techniques for identifying and evaluating mineral resources, the development of genetically superior plants of high protein value, the study of some specific aspects of the world population problem, and the development of efficient labour-intensive, industrial techniques and machines.

These are some proposals. The fundamental responsibility of the Centre will be to identify urgent and practical research development problems, and act as the catalyst for a consortia of action programs.

By its charter, the Centre can enlist the services of individuals, public or private institutions and agencies capable of conducting research in the natural or social sciences or in any area of technology which applies to the needs of the developing world. Its own staff will be deliberately limited in size to encourage a

high degree of interaction and to preclude the possibility of trying to do the job itself.

The variety of problems and the multi-disciplinary approach that must be taken to each will demand that every available research facility be known to the Centre. Most of the world's expertise exists in specialized institutions, and it will be the purpose of the Centre to seek it out and direct it to the solution of specific problems.

On projects it has identified, the Centre will have authority to finance research to be done on a contract basis by individuals, universities, private organizations, government departments or private industry. Financial support could also be allocated for complementary research related to the Centre's interests.

In this way the Centre will provide an opportunity for people and institutions to participate in a major program of international significance.

Technical and capital assistance is important, but just as necessary to make this assistance effective it must take root in the specific setting of each of the developing societies. Often the social back-lash to development projects can more than offset their technical or dollars-and-cents value. What is needed is a clear understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic forces which promote or impede change in developing areas.

In providing effective research programs the International Development Research Centre will become an important facet of Canada's contribution to reversing the trend towards economic and social disparity that deeply disturbs the citizens of our world community.